

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 003844

SIPDIS

STATE FOR PM/WRA PICO AND EUR/WE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/01/2015

TAGS: [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: SA/LW NEGOTIATIONS ON MARKING AND TRACING: FRANCE
LOOKING FOR SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME

REF: A) STATE 99866 B) 5/31 RECINOS/PICO E-MAIL

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Paul Mailhot, Reason 1.4 B/D

11. (C) Summary: France plans to work with its EU partners on Small arms and light weapons (SA/LW) negotiations, but in an effort to reach consensus, is prepared to take a more pragmatic bilateral approach. The French end game is to obtain an agreement on dealing with the illicit trade in SA/LW, as opposed to no agreement, therefore France is prepared to accept an Instrument that emphasizes cooperation and is politically versus legally binding. MFA experts are concerned that some national delegations will have a difficult time reaching an agreement as they have included among their delegates NGO members, who will have an ideological agenda. In terms of implementation, France believes that regional issues should also be factored in and consideration should be given to assisting poor countries to comply with an agreement. France is agnostic on record keeping, but strongly favors NATO standards for the marking of military SA/LW arms and ammunition. France looks forward to working with the U.S. on an end game strategy. End Summary.

12. (C) Ms. Marion Paradas, a DAS-equivalent director for strategic affairs, and Jean-Francois Guillaume, action officer for SA/LW, explained to us on June 1st that France's starting strategy for the upcoming negotiations on marking and tracing of SA/LW will be to back fully the EU position in support of a legally binding document. Responding to our May 31st demarche (ref A), they indicated that France shares U.S. concerns and, at the end of the day, is prepared to back a politically versus legally binding Instrument. Our aim is to obtain an agreement on the basis of cooperation, they added. Guillaume and Paradas cautioned that other participants (no specific country mentioned) could be expected to be less flexible given that they have included NGOs among their delegates. NGOs, Guillaume stated, have an agenda and are more intent on making a point than reaching an agreement.

13. (C) In terms of tracking arms transfers via the marking and tracing of ammunition and the SA/LW themselves, Guillaume questioned whether we were looking at civilian and military weapons separately. France does not see civilian arms as a global problem, hence, the French focus is on military arms, which are a source of destabilization in Africa, a region of major concern to France. He explained that every country has its own standards and rules on the registration and tracking of civilian arms. France also agrees that the UN Firearms Protocol already has provisions for marking, tracing, and record-keeping, and therefore there is no need to replicate the Protocol at the upcoming negotiations. Guillaume added that the MFA was aware of U.S. domestic pressures (lobbies) against registration. In terms of military ammunition and arms, Guillaume and Paradas expressed surprise that the U.S. has not backed the use of NATO standards. France strongly supports the inclusion of SA/LW military ammunition in an agreement. Paradas and Guillaume said they were unclear with respect to the U.S. position on seized, confiscated, or collected SA/LW, but observed that France favors the destruction of such weapons. They understood that it might seem more economical to redistribute such arms and ammunition to appropriate governmental recipients, but given the fragile nature of many governments in impoverished developing countries, it would be more appropriate to just destroy seized SA/LW arms and ammunition. Additionally, the French voiced support for assisting developing countries with the destruction of SA/LW and more generally on helping them to implement an agreed Instrument.

14. (C) Paradas and Guillaume joked that France has and will continue to maintain extensive archives dating to the French revolution and beyond. France was therefore agnostic on the 30 versus 10 year proposals for record-keeping and could support the shorter timeframe, as necessary. Returning to the discussion of end game options, Paradas and Guillaume observed that they could not speak for other EU member states, but that the French approach is to support the overall initiative next week and to seek a consensus document, which hopefully can allow for regional differences in implementation. As they noted earlier, France's focus is on the problems posed by SA/LW in Africa.

